

**MANSFIELD DOWNTOWN PARTNERSHIP
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
Tuesday, September 4, 2007
Mansfield Downtown Partnership Office
1244 Storrs Road (behind People's Bank in Storrs Commons)**

4:00 PM

Meeting Notes

Present: Chair: Philip Lodewick, Tom Callahan, Bruce Clouette, Barry Feldman, Matt Hart, Janet Jones, Frank McNabb, Betsy Paterson, Kristin Schwab, Betsy Treiber, David Woods

Staff: Cynthia van Zelm, Kathleen Paterson, Lee Cole-Chu

1. Call to Order

Philip Lodewick called the meeting to order at 4.06 pm.

2. Opportunity for Public to Comment

There was no public comment.

3. Approval of Minutes

Bruce Clouette made a motion to approve the meeting notes. Betsy Paterson seconded the motion. The meeting notes were approved unanimously.

4. Director's Report

Cynthia van Zelm reported to the Board the following:

Celebrate Mansfield Weekend is Saturday, September 15 starting with the fireworks event at 6 pm. She said the Festival is the 16th from noon to 5 pm. She pointed to the Festival flyers on the table.

Ms. van Zelm said the September Open House is this Thursday from 5:30 pm to 6:30 pm.

She said that Ms. Paterson, Tom Callahan, Town Planner Gregory Padick and herself would be giving a presentation to the Community Builders Institute at Northeast Utilities on Wednesday, about the Storrs Center

project. She said attendees include planners, town managers, economic developers, etc.

Ms. van Zelm said she was hoping to have an update on strategic planning for the October meeting.

She also said that she would be working on a date for the Nominating Committee to meet to discuss the idea of a Partnership Advisory Board.

5. Update on Storrs Center Project and Next Steps

Ms. van Zelm said the public hearing on LeylandAlliance's wetlands application to the Town Inland Wetlands Agency was tonight at 7 pm. She said she thought the feedback was positive from the field trip that members of the Agency and the Conservation Commission took to view the project area, including the degraded wetlands. She said that Leyland has a 45 minute presentation prepared for tonight.

Ms. van Zelm said that Ms. Paterson, Scott Brohinsky (UConn Director of University Relations), Steve Maun and Howard Kaufman from LeylandAlliance, and herself, met with Senator Lieberman's DC and District staff to update them on the project, and give them a tour of the project area. In particular, she felt that Colleen Shogan, Legislative Assistant for Senator Lieberman, had a better understanding of the project.

Betsy Paterson said she spoke to State Senator Don Williams about the funding for the parking garages and he indicated that he is pushing hard for the funding to be included on the State Bond Commission agenda.

Ms. van Zelm asked Town Manager and Board member Matt Hart to speak to the latest progress on the Dog Lane (1A) building. Mr. Hart said the goal is to keep the cost of the building as affordable to tenants as possible as they transition from other buildings. There are a few options (not necessarily exclusive) that he is working on with other Town staff, Ms. van Zelm and the LeylandAlliance team that would need to be approved by the Town Council.

The Town's Small Town Economic Assistance Program grant of \$500,000 will be used for site improvements.

A second option is to look at property tax abatement for a certain number of years/not in perpetuity.

A third option is to waive building permit fees for the building.

A fourth option is for the Town to lend money to Leyland, which would be at a more affordable interest rate than a bank. The only way to do the loan would be to create a redevelopment agency, which the Town Council would need to approve. Redevelopment agencies are often created to assist with financing in areas that need to be revitalized.

Ms. Paterson asked if the redevelopment agency could be made up of the same members of the Partnership. Mr. Hart said yes and that there is a minimum of five members required.

Bruce Clouette asked if creating a redevelopment agency would create any delays. Mr. Hart said it would depend on the amount of time the Town Council would need to review it. He mentioned that former Town Manager Martin Berliner had broached this idea with the Council about a year ago.

Mr. Hart said the Leyland and Town staffs are reviewing the numbers for the cost of the building.

Mr. Lodewick asked if it was the intention to build up the rents for the 1A building over time. Mr. Hart replied in the affirmative, noting that legally the abatement is only allowed for a certain number of years and he believes that it is 7 years.

Tom Callahan asked what type of assurance does the Town have on the building. Mr. Hart replied that there would be a surety, and it could be the building.

Mr. Clouette said from a Town Council perspective, the Town is looking at the efforts being made to sustain current businesses. He feels there would be support to assist these businesses.

Mr. Feldman asked if the Town would need a property tax abatement program. Mr. Hart thought the abatement could be done on a case-by-case basis.

In response to a question from Ms. Schwab, Ms. van Zelm said that most businesses that would need to be relocated are interested in the 1A building. There are a few that will not fit in the building, at least one that is not interested, and two that have already left and received relocation benefits as required by the Municipal Development Plan.

Mr. Hart reiterated that the Town Council would need to pass an ordinance to establish a redevelopment agency. Mr. Clouette said typically an ordinance is introduced and a public hearing is held on the ordinance two weeks to a month after the initial meeting. The Council will often vote that same day the public hearing is closed.

Janet Jones asked about the status of funding for the parking garages. Mr. Lodewick said we were still waiting on a response from the requests to the state and our congressional representatives on public funding for the garages. There has been vocal support on these levels for the Storrs Center project. It is unlikely that the Town's \$6 million request through congressional action will be granted but the hope is for \$2 million this year (Congressman Courtney was able to get \$500,000 in the House Transportation bill). Mr. Lodewick said that alternatives for other funding options have reviewed but are not fleshed out at this point. He said that if the developers were to fund the garage, the additional costs would be spread out to tenants and homeowners. Mr. Lodewick said an argument can be made that the project is a public/private partnership, which requires some public funding.

Frank McNabb asked if people will be charged for parking in the garage. Ms. van Zelm replied in the affirmative.

Ms. Schwab asked whether Leyland will go ahead with the 1A building without parking funding in place. Ms. van Zelm and Mr. Hart replied that Howard Kaufman and Macon Toledano of Leyland told them they would move ahead. Mr. Hart said they are still hopeful for a fall groundbreaking.

6. Report on Warwick Grove Trip

Ms. Paterson said that she, Board member Janet Jones, and Partnership staff Kathleen Paterson, and Ms. van Zelm had visited Leyland's Warwick Grove project. She said it is a primarily residential development but does have a community center. It is a lovely project and well laid out. There are condos, townhouses, and single-family homes. She said they ran into different people who were happy with the project.

Ms. Paterson said there is a need to be cognizant of the housing prices in the Warwick housing market vs. the Mansfield housing market. She feels it is important for the development team to remember that they are not comparable.

Ms. K. Paterson said that the number of housing units planned for Storrs Center are three times that of Warwick Grove which should help spread the costs out.

Ms. Paterson said all the housing was unique, had vibrant colors, and good landscaping, which allowed for privacy especially with the houses being very close together.

Ms. Jones said the project is age restricted.

7. Report from Committees

Advertising and Promotion/Business Development and Retention

Dean Woods said that the Committee met jointly with the Business Development and Retention Committee to review a proposal by Discover Our Town, LLC to create a Mansfield Community Guide, a regional guide, and a Mansfield website. Clay Crawford was at the meeting representing Discover Our Town. Ads are sold to support the guides and website. Dean Woods said he thought the guides were essentially a map of the town.

Business Development and Retention Committee Chair Mike Gergler said his concern about the guides were that they would allow businesses outside of Mansfield. He expressed this concern to Mr. Crawford in the meeting. He said he was supportive of the website concept. He said he was less supportive of the guides as they will mainly be distributed at the I-84 welcome centers and not in town. Mr. Gergler said that they have an exclusive right to put their guides in the welcome center. The local Chamber of Commerce is not able to get its information into the welcome centers. Mr. Gergler realizes that the guides are going ahead.

Dean Woods said work on the Storrs Center DVD is progressing and it should be completed soon.

He said that Mayor Paterson and Ms. van Zelm had sent a letter to Mr. Callahan to see if the Store 24 building and area could be cleaned, as well as whether the empty storefronts could be utilized. Don Anderson, UConn Property Manager, gave Ms. van Zelm access to two of the empty storefronts. Once the Festival is over, she will reconnect with him about pursuing some of the ideas covered in the letter.

Ms. van Zelm recognized Ms. K. Paterson's good work on the newsletter. She said the newsletter had gone out in the Chronicle and would be sent in their shopper edition for local non-subscribers as well. A few hundred copies will be kept in the Partnership office for distribution as well.

Festival on the Green

Ms. Paterson said there will be many great events at the Festival including the bikes, tykes and trikes parade, which will go down Storrs Road. The Festival will include UConn Dining Services doing cooking demonstrations, floral demonstrations by Campus Florist, a juried art show, pie baking and pie eating contests, and a fly fishing demo, among

other events. Ms. K. Paterson added that the parade starts early this year – at 11:45 am so people should come early and watch it.

She recognized Ms. Schwab and Ms. Jones for the great amount of time and energy they have put into the Festival.

Ms. Paterson made a pitch to the Board for financial contributions to the Festival as it is all supported by sponsorships and donations and does not come out of the Partnership operating budget.

Ms. K. Paterson talked about the gift baskets, which are a new addition. The money raised will support the Partnership. There will be three themes: wine, UConn sports, and family fun. The Jorgensen donated an entire subscription to their children's series and the Nathan Hale Inn & Conference Center donated a pool party.

Finance and Administration

Mr. Callahan said most of the Committee's discussion was covered under the Storrs Center update. He noted that there were many people working on trying to move the Town/Partnership request at the Office of Policy and Management for garage funding. He said nothing would break until the Governor and the Legislature agree on a budget for the Bond Commission.

He said the Storrs Center project was discussed at a UConn meeting with the Commissioner of the Department of Economic and Community Development and Rob Simmons, the Governor's business advocate. They all expressed support for the project.

Mr. Callahan reminded the Board that the Committee meets with Leyland quarterly and the Committee will meet with Mr. Kaufman and Mr. Toledano at the September meeting.

Ms. Schwab asked what the status is of the Madison project. Mr. Callahan said that Leyland received a provisional permit from the Department of Environmental Protection for the wastewater system. The opponents of the project are still pursuing ways to stop it.

Membership Development

Ms. Treiber said the Committee has a new member – John Saddlemire, UConn Vice President for Student Affairs. The UConn contingent on the Committee including Dolan Evanovich and David Martel are bringing a lot of energy and ideas to the Committee.

Ms. Treiber said Ms. van Zelm is looking at ways to sign up new members electronically. There was some discussion of dovetailing Community Center membership with Partnership membership. Ms. van Zelm will ask Mr. Hart about whether this is feasible.

Ms. Treiber said the Committee's goal is to reach 400 members this year.

8. Adjourn

Ms. Treiber made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Callahan seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 5 pm.

Meeting notes taken by Cynthia van Zelm.